

LETTERS

A Designated Combat Armor Badge

Dear *ARMOR*,

I noticed in the current *ARMOR* that General Franks at TRADOC asked the Chief of Staff of the Army to approve Expert and Combat Armor Badges back in 1991. Apparently, the Chief of Staff of the Army did not approve.

You might be interested to know that U.S. advisors to the Vietnamese armor force have had a Combat Armor Badge since early 1966. In those days, Vietnamese armor had no tanks, only M113 armored personnel carriers. The desk jockeys at the Pentagon apparently thought they were armored infantry, because they awarded the Combat Infantry Badge to their armor branch advisors. When I was promoted to lieutenant colonel and moved from the 4th ARVN Cavalry to the Office of the Chief of Armor, he asked what my CIB was. When I told him, he said, "Oh, but where is your Combat Armor Badge?" When I told him we didn't have one, he said, "Very bad! I fix!" He cut me a general order, designating the Vietnamese armor branch insignia as a Combat Armor Badge, which U.S. Armor advisors have worn proudly over their right pockets since then and with the blessing of our own armor branch.

RAYMOND R. BATTREALL
COL, U.S. Army, Retired

Editor's note: For those interested in the continuing armor badge debate, please see "Re-instating the Combat Tanker Badge," on page 45 in this issue.

Feedback on Modifying the M1 for Urban Battle

Dear *ARMOR*,

I wish to congratulate Captains Evans and Bridges for their fine, thought-provoking article on fighting tanks in urban environments. They make some very telling arguments, especially in their examples from combat in Chechnya, to drive home the importance of being properly equipped and trained for urban combat. However, they make the statement, "individual tanks, working with a squad." I realize I am retired and not fully cognizant of modern doctrine, but no tank should be without his wingman in combat. That is the tank's best protection — another tank. True, armored cavalry units sometimes substitute M3s for a wingman in hunter-killer teams, but these are habitual relationships with everyone fully understanding each other's capabilities and limitations, and are bonded over years (at least months) of training. At some point, possibly when we transform to the Objective Force design with units of action, we might establish habitual relationships between squads of infantry and a single tank, but I doubt we will ever reach that level of training. When tanks were employed singly at the Joint Readiness Training Center, they were highly ineffective against the skilled Opposing Force. While an infantry or Marine ground commander might think a single tank working in conjunction with infantry is effective, he is probably just so happy to have a tank with him that he fails to real-

ize how much more effective they are when used in pairs (at a minimum). As armor leaders, you must train infantry leaders at all levels to understand this.

ALAN R. HORN
LTC, U.S. Army, Retired

Dear *ARMOR*,

I'm writing in response to the article, "Modifying the M1 for Urban Battle," written by Captains Bridges and Evans in the July-August 2003 issue. In the article's discussion of survivability enhancements, the authors promote the use of the 80mm French Galix grenade launching system, overlooking the 66mm grenade launchers already mounted on every M1 tank. Presumably, the advantages of the Galix would be to fire "stun, smoke, flare, and tear gas [grenades] singly or in volleys." The 66mm systems already provide those capabilities as a result of significant development by the Army Product Manager Obscuration (PMO). For instance, the M6 discharger, already fielded to the Stryker, can be retrofitted to the M1 using an already developed kit. The M6 discharger provides the advantage of having two loaded salvos, and the ability to fire each tube singly or multiple tubes in volleys.

In addition to the discharger upgrade, the PMO developed obscurant grenades that can defeat visual, visual and infrared, and infrared and millimeter wave associated RSTA devices; and the PMO has developed a selection of non-lethal grenades, including tear gas, flash/bang, and blunt trauma variants.

The authors hit a very important point in the inclusion of laser warning systems as a means to increase situational awareness and respond to increasingly sophisticated threats such as beam-riding antitank guided missiles (ATGMs). However, the sensors *need* to be coupled with an upgraded smoke grenade fire control system. A launched obscurant cloud will actually defeat incoming ATGMs of all kinds. With a requirement from the Armor School, we could develop and field a sensor equipped fire control that will truly increase survivability.

Finally, I was dismayed to find that every photo, figure, or sketch of an armored vehicle in the magazine showed the 66mm tubes empty and/or hidden behind the canvas covers. Video during the march through Iraq clearly showed the launchers loaded there, but for some unknown reason they're always empty during training, demos, and photo-ops here. I would love to see some photos with the grenades in use, and get some feedback from their use in theatre.

DAVID BROWN, P.E.
Product Manager Obscuration

Dear *ARMOR*,

I must strongly disagree with the authors of "Modifying the M1 for Urban Battle." While they recommend intriguing modifications to the M1 tank, they have lost sight of the doctrinal fundamental role of tanks in military operations in urban terrain (MOUT).

MOUT is not a "combined arms team" in the sense that all members are equal. MOUT is an infantry fight with tanks supporting. Infantry leads, tanks overwatch. Tank platoons support infantry companies, with tank sections supporting infantry platoons. The infantry platoons designate individual squads to accompany (protect) individual tanks. The idea that tanks lead while watching out against dead-space potential targets is plain flat wrong.

Better communications are crucial and dedicated radio and telephone commo between the crew and squads is critical and must be practiced. However, a tank crew is already fully occupied without strapping on added last-minute new-fangled systems, especially if those systems become an excuse for misusing the tanks.

One other point completely missed is that the M2 Bradley can also support in MOUT. It has better gun elevation, a shorter barrel, and can fire precisely in the counter-sniper scenario where collateral damage is to be minimized.

Again, MOUT is tough. The doctrine exists and must be trained and practiced. Specialized modifications should be considered, but they must not result in bad tactics and poor operational planning.

CHESTER A. KOJRO
LTC, U.S. Army, Retired

Use Caution When Employing Mech Snipers on the Force XXI Battlefield

Dear *ARMOR*,

I commend CPT Morrow for raising the issue on snipers in his article, "Mechanized Snipers on the Force XXI Battlefield," in the July-August 2003 issue. His unit's efforts are noteworthy. Still, I wish to caution him that some of the proposed tasks contradict proper sniper employment and should be executed by other soldiers.

CPT Morrow is correct that doctrine, U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 23-10, says little about employment by mechanized battalions. His bullet list of effective techniques that his unit employed is sound. However, placing all snipers under the scout platoon and assigning still heavier weapons like .50-cal rifles is counter-productive. While a sniper can do so, you do not need one to call in indirect fires. That is a common skill.

If heavy antitank rifles are needed for engaging light vehicles, then train the dismounted scouts to employ them as an alternate to AT-4 or Javelin.

Expecting a sniper to dismount and spray a high volume of fire against rapidly moving enemy vehicles as a form of hasty ambush is a complete misunderstanding of sniper techniques concerning stalking, stealth, and survival. Instead, train the other scouts and infantry to be better marksmen.

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FM 23-10 clearly states that in a mechanized infantry battalion, each 2-man sniper team is assigned directly to an infantry squad of a company. This makes perfect sense given the range, speed, and weaponry of mechanized forces. Snipers are more than just good shots. They are an intelligence asset and are experts at stealthy movement and field craft. They can most effectively contribute within their effective range at the company level, especially in support of dismounted operations.

Mechanized battalion scouts operate at much greater ranges and are much more mobile. If battalion scouts are specifically establishing dismounted listening and observation posts, task organizing the company snipers is an option. However, I suggest that leaving the snipers to support the company outposts is a more likely and effective alternative.

Again, CPT Morrow is totally correct that snipers are underused and often forgotten. My concern is mainly with the appropriate echelon and I suggest that the doctrinal employment at company level will be more effective. At least give it a try and report back if it does not work.

The utility of the .50-cal rifle for use by battalion scouts should be explored and assessed as a separate and distinct issue.

CHESTER A. KOJRO
LTC, U.S. Army, Retired